

something already, and maist hear more hereafter. Some other of thy Companions, who write against Friends, have brought *Scriptures* to prove what they Write; but have not rightly applyed them; nor informed Friends so to do. Art thou willing to be Judged for not Teaching them, as aforesaid, as thou hast Judged Us? Namely, to be *As Blind as Priests*, &c. Why shouldest thou be Offended at our citing those wholesome *Epistles*? dost thou herein shew a right esteem for those *Holy Scriptures*? cannot we cite *Scriptures*, and leave People rightly to apply them, as Guided by that *Holy Spirit*, that Guided the *Holy Men* in giving them forth; But for so doing, be by thee Judged *To neglect the Heavenly Gift in our selves, and to be as Blind as Four Blind Priests*? It seems to appear in thy Book, that thou hast an Opinion, *That the Tree of Knowledge is good for Food*. But it were better for thee to wait upon God in the Light of his Son, and therein to be Obedient to Him, that so thou mayst Eat of the *Fruit of the Tree of Life*; which Food would fill thee with *Charity*, without which thou canst not be Accepted of God, who is Love (or *Charity*) as the Holy Apostle Testified.

The word *Dignity* expressed in *Peter* and *Jude*s Epistles, cited by *J. Batt*, and his *Three Companions*, *W. R.* doth Paraphrase upon, in a scornful manner, against the said Friends, and others; as may be seen in part 2. pag. 92.

Observe, The word *Dignity* signifies *Honour*, as the *Dictionary* render it. How often doth *W. R.* in his Book, call *J. S.* and *J. W.* *Honourable*? And in his *Preface to the Reader*, p. 3. he calls *J. S.* and *J. W.* *Two ancient and honourable Labourers in the Gospel of Christ, whose Conversations and Doctrines, I have not known or understood to be exceeded in Godliness, by any Mortal Man whatsoever*, saith he.† Doth he not herein highly *Honour* or *Dignify* them? Why may not God *Honour* or *Dignify* his Servants; who seek not the Honour that comes from the Earthly Mind; but that which comes from God only? God hath said by the Mouth of the Prophet, * *Them that Honour Me, I will Honour: And before True Honour, goeth Humility.* *

†But *W. R.* thus high applauding *J. S.* and *J. W.* as Not exceeded by any Mortal Man whatsoever, hath not answered the Witness of God in our Consciences; and his Narrative, and their Paper of Condemnation prove the contrary: And hath not *W. R.* herein applauded *J. S.* and *J. W.* somewhat like, as the Samaritans did *Sim. Magus*?

*Much more might be said to this; and that from the *Scriptures of Truth*, as well as inward Experience. But this in short at present.

The word *Government* is also Paraphrased on by *W. R.* in the two aforesaid pages in a bitter and scornful manner, against *J. Batt*, and many of the Lord's Servants. To which I say, on the behalf of Christ and his Church, That we own no other Government in his Church, but that which is upon his Shoulders; as God hath promised. *He is one in the Male, and in the Female*; as the Holy Apostle said; who is Prince of Peace, and keeps his Subjects in Peace, and Unity one with another. *J. B.*

in the
WILDERNESS
Of

*Solid Grounds of sweet Consolation,
which the People of the Lord have from the precious Pro-
phecies in the Word, while walking through their Wilder-
ness Lott, in their way towards Heaven.*

Worth as the summe of severall Sermons preached some
times agoe, unto such of the Lords People, as were made
to seek the Bread of their Soules, with the Perill
of their lives. *WILLIAMS*

Elia
By a faithfull Minister of the Gospell of
Jesus Christ now deceased.

: 9. *We eat our bread with the Perill of our lives, because of
the Sword of the Wilderness.*

: 17 *When the poor and needy seek water and there is none,
and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them,
the God of Israel will not forsake them. V. 18. I will open rivers
in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will
make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs
of water.*



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T H E R E F A C E.

TH E *Jews* have a tradition of that *Manna* ; wherewith *God* fed *Israel* in the wilderness forty years , that the taste thereof was such , and so various , that it answered every man's appetit , and tasted to him of whatsoever his soul desired . And look how uncertain is the Jewish tradition of the material *Manna* , was gathered of the earth for the space of forty years in wilderness of the Land of *Aegypt* , so certain is this Chri-
 stian truth of the spiritual *Manna* , the *Word of God* ; that of Heaven . That Angels food , wherewith *God* feeds his Church in all ages successively , and all the children of his , the *Israelites* Indeed , respectively through all the whole of their life and travel in the world (which is the great *erness*) that it hath in it a real supply of all the necessities , hath alwayes in it a word in season to all persons at all times in every condition . To the dead it's Life , to the living health , to the weary it's refreshment , to the weak it's strength , to babes milk , to the strong men it's meat , to the young it's bread to the thirsty it's water , to the drooping sorrowfull heart , it's wine , to the faint it's apples , oranges , Cinnamon , saffron , spiknard , calamus , and spices of the merchant : to such as love dainties , it's marrowiness , honey of the rock and dropping sweeter than the comb : to the wounded it's the balme of *Gilead* , to the blind and weak sighted it's eye salve , and ointment to their eyes . To such near souls a love to be all glorious , and to keep their garments clean , it's a crown ,
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chains of the neck, bracelets, earrings, pendants, and ornaments of all sorts; and if they like to be in fashion, and go fine in the court of a Heavenly conversation and communion with God, it presents them a large bright glass, where ~~at~~ they may daily dress themselves to purpose: This glass is no falsifying one or multiplying glass, but a just discovering and directing, here are discovered not onely all the obliquities of gesture, & faults, of feature and spots upon the face or cloathes, but likewise the very inmost thoughts and intents of the heart, with the most subtle imaginations of the mind are here manifested. Here you are directed to fit all your souls ornaments in the finest spiritual fashion, and to compose your gesture; & order your motion so as you may be able to stand in the presence of him who is greater than *Salomon*. This large and bright glass doth stand in King *Salomons* bed-chamber in the book of the *Canticles*, and in it you may see your self from head to foot, from top to toe; there you see the head beautiful with locks, *Cant.* 4. there you see the sweet comely countenance of the Saints, which the Lord is so much in love with, that he is in continual desire to see it; there you may see these eyes that ravish his heart, and so throughout even to the feet, that are very beautiful with shoes, *Cant.* 7:1. For such as are destitute and unprovided, the *Word of God* is a portion to the poor, it's the riches of the treasure of choice silver, and fine gold; here is that which dispells darkness, clears doubts dissolves hardness; disappoints fears, discharges cares, solaces sorrow, and satisfies desires: Here is counsel and strength for peace and warr, here is daily intelligence from heaven, and in a word here is the best companion that ever a soul did choose, and blessed are they who can spiritually tune that short, but high note *Psal.* 119: 98. *Thy commandments are ever with me*, they are not with the soul as a burden of idle attendants are with a man. See what good offices they performe by their presence, *Prov.* 6: 22, 23. They are as *Hobab* to *Israel*, and *David* to *Nabal*, eyes and a guard in the wilderness to us. In the world, and chiefly in this world, we change seats and societies, we shift conditions, and habitations, we go through
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the wilderness of *Marah*, from troop to troop, we are driven from Temple, Altar, & Oracle, we are divided from our relations & dearest acquaintance, whom we loved as our own souls, & spoiled of our companions, with whom we took sweet counsel, & went to the house of *God*. But blessed is that soul, who in all this can say, I am not alone. My good old friend, the Word of *God*, the Bible, the guide of my youth hath not forsaken me; It's with me, yea it's in me, in the midst of my heart, I bear about with me daily a living copy of these Lively Oracles, & they are more near me than my very self; for my heart is within me, but they are within my heart, I may be separated from selfe by death, that separates dearest friends, my heart may be plucked from my breast, & my soul dislodged of my body: but my companion, the *Word of God* shall nothing separate, prosperity shall not cause me forget it, & adversity will not cause it forget me, I will not forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickned me, *Psal. 119. 93.* as those who live upon the shoal have a very just diall of the motion & measure of the Water, which they can make use of without the Sun: So are the ebblings & flowings of our affections to the Word of God, the surest, most universal & constant witness of our daily condition; for albeit the darkness, that is upon the face of our souls may pretend that it is night with us, yet, if it be full sea in our affections to the Word of *God*, we may be sure it's noon day, & when it's low water in our affections to the Word, then it's mid-night: now the *Sun* was never seen at midnight. Be sure it is in with that soul that's out of conceit with *God's Word*. Now to say nothing of the malignant qualities, of gross ignorant, profane Atheists, & obstinat unbelievers, who are habitually disaffected to the Word of *God*, nor yet to mention the wilful groundless fits of pettish distempers in Saints, who many times do take up at their foot groundless & needless pleas, & discouraging apprehensions, which they cannot so easily lay-down again, *Psal. 42: 5. Why art thou cast-down, O! my Soul? why art thou disquieted within me! Psal. 77: 2. My sore ran in the night, and my Soul refused to be comforted. To pass these (I say)*

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is bearing no direct impeachment of the above said commendation of the absolute sufficiency of the Word of God to answer all cases ; These three things that in a time of temptation, in an hour find the power of darkness, do readily concur to diminish the Saints respect to the Word of God : The first is, that their case seems odd, unparaleled, & unpracticable : in Scripture they find no case equal with theirs, in all respect that has been cured. Secondly, in their weakness, they thereupon do conclude, that their case is really hopeless & irremediable. But thirdly, the saddest of all is, that they find the word not only silent for them, but to speak directly & aloud against them, as they think, smiting, hinking & hammering them with sad & heavy threatnings & intimations of determined wrath, rejection, ruin to come upon them yet for all this in all these they erre, not knowing the Scripture, but that there is hope, & the *Scripture* is not to be cast out with, as an unkind, & uncomfortable companion in such cases, let these things be *considered*, for vindication of the Scripture to souls thus exercised : & be it granted, as the truth is, a souls case may be such for circumstances that the Scripture mentions none paralel with it in all points that has been cured, the same is all along to be understood of Churches & nations respectively, as of particular persons ; yet I am confidently perswaded that there is no case now incident to any, whether nation, Church, or person, but the Scripture holdeth forth some, either as evil, or worse, whether for soul or suffering that have been helped. There hath no temptation taken you saith the Apostle *1 Cor. 10 : 13.* but such as is common to man : is thy case sinful ; behold the Scripture tells us that he obtained mercy, who once a-day thought himself the chief of sinners, *1 Tim. 1 : 15.* And that as one exquisit rare peece of mercy is set down for a patern to all those, who should after believe in Christ to life everlasting. Christ loves to have sinners changed, & for that he puts forth his patern as merchants do their samples of rich commodities, & sure since that time he hath put off many such pieces, & yet the patern stands forth, shewing that there is more abundance to serve all that have need. To say nothing of

Pauls

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Pauls sin (which sure was great enough) nor of many since his time, who may have thought themselves the chief of Sinners as well as he did, where I think I hear a kind of strife amongst mercies clients, who shall be most beholden to free mercy & grace, this patern makes it fully certain, that there is mercy for the chief of sinners be who he will, & that he, whosoever he be, that supposes himselfe to be the chief of Sinners, is not thereby warranted to despair of mercy: but rather to plead the greatest interest of necessity, & to look upon himself as such. Is thy case afflicted, and thy sufferings extraordinary, see *Iobs* desperat case, & *Hemans* distracted case; see the Churches case in the *Law*: in whose case there is hope, though it had not been done under the whole heaven as was done to *Jerusalem*; look to the bond of witnesses & to *Christ*, *Hebr.* 11: 12 chap: but here is the great case of the troubled soul, cleanly sufferings for the exercise of my graces (as *Jobs* case) or for the testimony of the thruth, & a good conscience as these of old witnesses & Martyrs: I could well bear in these respects; I could count it all joy to fall into diverse tentations, and I could count it my honour & mercy, as well to suffer for *Christ* as to beleëve on him. I could do with such sufferings as *Job* would have done with his adversaries book, I could take them on my shoulder & bind them as a crown to me, & as a prince would I go near unto him. But alace I suffer with an ill conscience, my afflictions are to me the punishment of my iniquity & the fruits of my folly. This case indeed (if any) requires the tongue of the learned & a word in season to the soul that is weary of it; & if the word of *God* help me not here, I have lost the cause, & am come short of my accounts. But there is hope in *Israel* also concerning this thing *Ezr.* 10. 2. and I find the Scripture clear in these particulars concerning this case. 1. I find indeed great odds between cleanly suffering for righteousness sake, and suffering meerly for ill doing, the one is a thing thank-worthy and a glorifying of *God* in the highest manner actively, the other is not thank-worthy, but the mans misery; in the one the man has a good conscience and Joy there from; in the other a man hath an ill conscience with terrour & sorrow proceeding there from; the one gives

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a man good confidence of assistance & of the Spirit of God, & of *Glory* to rest upon him, the other makes a man despond & droop; the one stops, the other opens the mouth of wicked men therefore says *Peter*, 1 *Pet* 3: 17. Its better if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for wel doing than for ill doing.

2. Its clear, we ought to bear afflictions with more patience, *Micah*. 7: 9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, nor ought any living man to complain, who suffers meerly for the punishment of his sin. *Lam*. 3. 39. And if he must complain let him complain to God, and bemoan his case in quietness to him: it's farr better for men to bear their yoke quietly, & to sitt alone; than to pine away in their iniquity mourning one to another, while they do not cry to the Lord. Too much whining & complaining, to me will be found labour that profits not, try it who will. But as a man would complain to God, so he would beware of complaining of God, he would leave his complaint upon himself, *Iob* 10. 1. & lay the blame of his affliction home upon himself *Psalms* 38. 5. my folly makes it so.

3. Its clear from the whole history of the Scripture, that most of all the Saints afflictions (whether conjunctly in the body of a Church or Nation, or severally in their own persons particularly) have been the chastisements of their iniquity, and the rods of men, that is, such rods as men use upon misdemeaning children; I find this true, especially of a whole Church or Nation.

4. Its clear, that the Lords rods, whether publick or personal upon his sinfull people flow from love in the fountain, are mixed with love in the course, & run forth in love in the issue, if this seem strange to any, let him remember that he that spares the rod hates the child, but he that chasteneth him betimes delivereth his soul. Gods, thoughts concerning his people are thoughts of peace & not of evil to give them an expected end, *Ier*. 29. 11. and in the midst of wrath he will remember mercy, *Hab*. 3. 2. Gods love to his people is very consistent with his anger, though it be even fervent to the degree of wrath,) but not with hatred, for Hatred, not anger is loves opposite, & angry love is often times most profitable, *Heb*. 12. 10. Let none therefore

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fore be weak and childish witted, as to conclude I am sharply scourged, sore smitten for my folly, therefore my father has cast me off, and cares not for me, and yet we find affliction that makes a wise man mad, raising such apprehensions oft times in the wise heart of a strong *David*; I do not here speak how the Lord causes his people pass under the rod, and brings them within the bond of the Covenant, *Eze. 20. 37.* and he chooses them in the furnace of affliction, *48. 10.* and that was an affliction for sin, and a sadly deserved rod. And yet the Lord when he would weall a piece of the finest mettall, goes neither to coffer nor cup-board where the glisterings of peace & prosperity dazle the eyes of the undiscerning beholder, but he goes to the smoak and coome of the furnace, and there he pitches upon the Saints of the last refine: The Lord goes down to the Land of affliction and house of bondage to visit his people, & there falls in love with them, & there he woos them, and there he weds them in their mourning garments; for they get not the oyl of Joy nor the garment of praise, till the second day of the marriage, and then they rise from the dust and shine, there light cometh, and the glory of the Lord ariseth upon them. See *Isai. 48. Hos. 2. 14.* and foreward, *Psal. 61. 3.* In fine the Scripture is full of rare and satisfactory expressions of Gods love to his people, even under suffering, which their own wickedness hath procured whereof it will appertain to speak particularly in the sequell of the discourse ensuing. 5. It is clear from Scripture that there is a difference to be put betwixt sin bringing on and procuring sufferings, and bitter afflictions, and sin discovered in and by afflictions. Let God cast an holy Job in the furnace, and it will discover a scum, that will cause himself say, my transgressions are infinit, and yet the Lord himself sustains Jops plea, that it was not for sin that he was purifying him. 6. It is clear, that there is a great difference betwixt the righteousness of God, and the unrighteousness of men afflicting his people, as we see frequently in *Jobs* case, yea find an excellent, rare comfortable dispensation of God to his people, that he will some times scourge them with the golden rod of *Martyrdome*, correct their faults in an honourable way, &